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LISTING OF PENDING CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 40 (Cancelled).

41. (Currently Amended) A process for making a cellulose ether derivative comprising

a) mixing a composition comprising a loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers that

a) has a bulk density of at least ~~8 g/100 ml~~ 20 g/100 ml and

b) at least 50 wt % of the fibers in the loose mass passes through a US standard sieve size #10 (2 mm opening) as a starting material with a base to form an activated cellulose mixture and,

b) reacting the activated cellulose mixture with at least one etherifying agent to form a cellulose ether derivative product containing a cellulose ether derivative, wherein mixing power of the activated cellulose mixture is 5% lower than the mixing power of the same process using comparably comminuted purified celluloses.

42. (Original) The process of claim 41, wherein the mixing power of the activated cellulose mixture is 10% lower than the mixing power of the same process using comparably comminuted purified celluloses.

43. (Original) The process of claim 41, wherein the mixing power of the activated cellulose mixture is 15% lower than the mixing power of the same process using comparably comminuted purified celluloses.

44. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the starting material is first treated with the etherifying agent and then treated with a base to form the cellulose ether derivative product.

45. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the starting material is treated simultaneously with an etherifying agent and a base to form the cellulose ether derivative product.

46. (Original) The process of claim 41, wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, barium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide, strong organic bases and mixtures thereof.

47. (Original) Process of claim 41 wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of amines, quaternary ammonium hydroxides, and mixtures thereof.

48. (Original) The process of claim 41, wherein the etherifying agent is selected from the group consisting of alkyl halides, alkenyl halides, alkylene oxides, glycidyl ethers, metal salts of alpha-halogenoalkanoates, vinyl sulfonates, and mixtures thereof.

49. (Original) The process of claim 41, wherein the etherifying agent is selected from the group consisting of methyl chloride, ethyl chloride, ethylene oxide, propylene oxide, butylene oxide, monochloroacetic acid and salts thereof, butyl glycidyl ether, and glycidyl silane.

50. (Cancelled).

51. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the cellulose ether derivative is selected from the group consisting of carboxymethylcellulose (CMC), hydrophobically modified carboxymethylcellulose (HMC MC), methylcellulose (MC), ethylcellulose (EC), hydroxyethylcellulose (HEC), carboxymethylhydroxyethylcellulose (CMHEC), carboxymethyl hydrophobically modified hydroxyethylcellulose (CMHMHEC), hydrophobically-modified hydroxyethylcellulose (HMHEC), methylhydroxyethylcellulose (MHEC), methylhydroxypropylcellulose (MHPC), ethylhydroxyethylcellulose (EHEC), hydrophobically-modified ethylhydroxyethylcellulose (HMEHEC), methylethylhydroxyethylcellulose (MEHEC), hydroxypropylcellulose (HPC), and hydrophobically-modified hydroxypropylcellulose (HMHPC).

Claims 52 - 55 (Cancelled).

56. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein cellulose ether derivative product is further processed to increase its purity.

57. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 56, wherein the further processing comprises extracting nonpolymeric salts from the cellulose ether derivative

product through the use of liquid media in which the cellulose ether derivative is rendered substantially insoluble.

58. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the starting material or the cellulose ether derivative product is further processed with a viscosity reducing agent to lower the intrinsic viscosity of the cellulose ether product.

59. (Original) The process of claim 58, wherein the viscosity reducing agent is performed by chemical means.

60. (Original) The process of claim 58, wherein the viscosity reducing agent is performed by mechanical means.

61. (Original) The process of claim 58, wherein the viscosity reducing agent is performed by irradiation.

62. (Original) The process of claim 58, wherein the viscosity reducing agent is performed by enzymatic means.

63. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the cellulose ether derivative product contains at least 65% of the cellulose ether derivative.

64. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the cellulose ether derivative product contains at least 75% of the cellulose ether derivative.

65. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the cellulose ether derivative product contains at least 95% of the cellulose ether derivative.

66. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 51, wherein the cellulose ether derivative is carboxymethylcellulose having a degree of substitution is 0.1 to 2.5.

Claims 67 - 93 (Cancelled).

94. (Original) The process of claim 41 wherein the starting material is dispersed in a nonreactive organic diluent.

95. (Original) The process of claim 94 wherein the nonreactive organic diluent is selected from the group consisting of acetone, methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, t-butyl alcohol, and mixtures thereof.

96. (Original) The process of claim 95 wherein the nonreactive organic diluent contains water.

97. (Cancelled).

98. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 75 g/100 ml.

99. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 60 g/100 ml.

100. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 41, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 50 g/100 ml.

101. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 97, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 75 g/100 ml.

102. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 97, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 60 g/100 ml.

103. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 97, wherein the bulk density of the loose mass of comminuted raw cotton linter fibers has an upper limit of 50 g/100 ml.